SARDAR BHAGAT SINGH

(A SHORT LIFE-SKETCH)



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Reference Section
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DEDICATED

to the inspiring memory

OF

SARDAR KARTAR SINGH

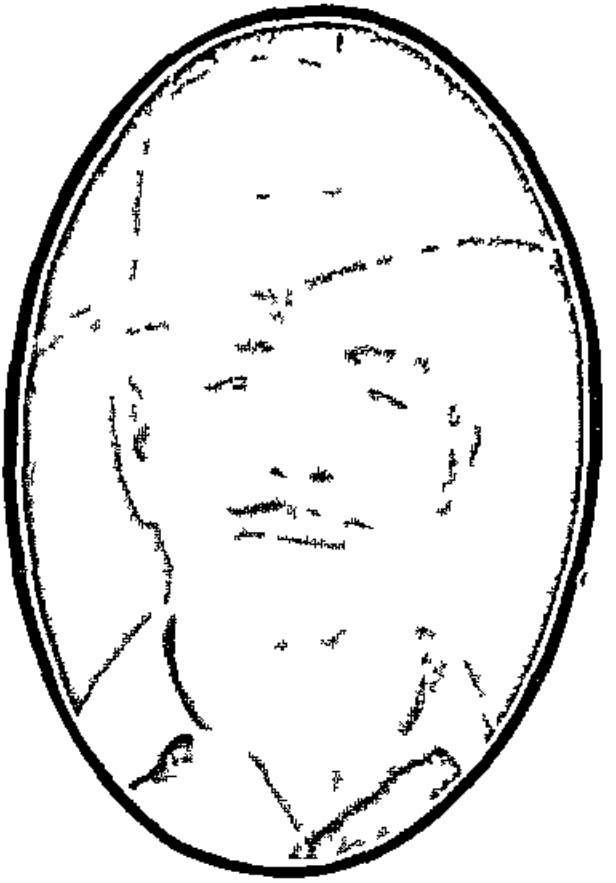
WHO

Died on the gallows in 1915 while not yet twenty, and

WHOSE LIFE

Bhagat Singh wrote in such a feeling language,

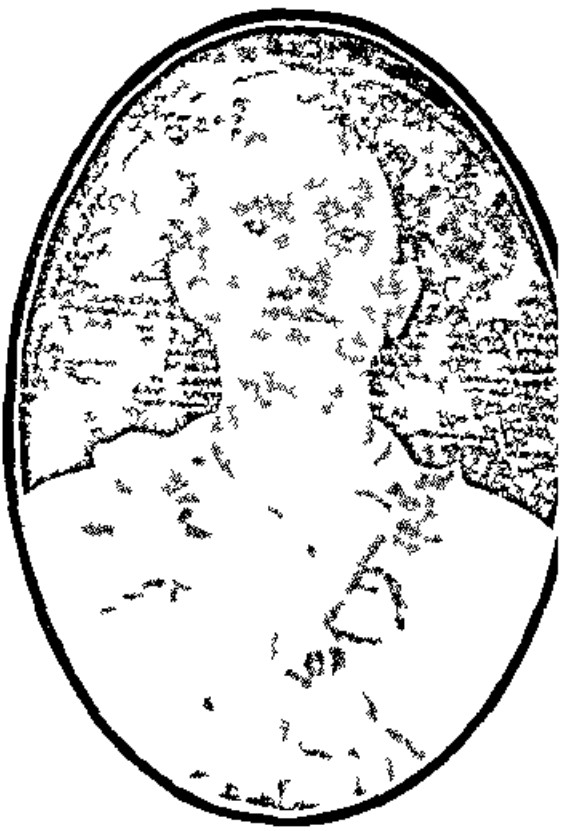
BY THE AUTHOR



LATE SARDAR BHAGAT SINGH



LATE RAJGURU



LATE SUKHDEVA

SARDAR BHAGAT SINGH

CHAPTER I

THE FAMILY AND THE BOY

Sardar Bhagat Singh comes of a well-known Sikh family from the district of Lyallpur. His ancestors were Khalsa Sardars who, under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, helped in the spread of the Sikh Kingdom against the turbulent Pathans on the west and the dangerous English on the east. For helping the Sikh rulers with life and blood, this family was rewarded with considerable land.

Bhagat Singh's grandfather, Sardar Arjun Singh was a big landlord. Though more than 80 years old, he is still strong and used to take keen interest in the

proceedings of the Lahore Conspiracy Case. He is full of nationalist spirit. His brothers, Sardar Bahadur Dilbagh Singh and others, through their services to the Government, have grown rich and are now prosperous and men of rank and title. But Sardar Arjun Singh chose another path which inevitably leads to poverty and obscurity. The grandmother of Sardar Bhagat Singh, Sm. Jaikaur, is a typical old woman of Hindu family. It is she who has brought up all her sons and grandsons. She is a very brave lady; still she talks of Sufi Amba Prasad, one of the pioneer nationalists of India, who used to visit them. Once the police came to arrest Sufi Sahib while he was in the house of Sardar Arjun Singh. But the brave lady saved him by a clever trick.

Sardar Arjun Singh had three sons, Sardar Kishen Singh, Sardar Ajit Singh

and Sardar Swarna Singh. All the three brothers are known throughout the Punjab for their sincere love of country. Their patriotism has stood the severest test of imprisonment, banishment and poverty.

It was Sardar Ajit Singh who is reputed to have drawn Lala Lajpat Rai to the field of political service for the motherland. Though quite rich, Sardar Ajit Singh foresook the comforts of a home-life and began to organize the Punjab for political emancipation. At this time, *i.e.*, about 1904 and 1905, the partition of Bengal came as Godsend. The violent and continued agitation in Bengal over this act of Lord Curzon had reverberations in the distant Punjab where Lala Lajpat Rai, Sardar Ajit Singh and Sufi Amba Prasad—a great friend of Ajit Singh—began to rouse up the country by eloquent speeches. In

this agitation Sardar Kishen, the eldest of the brothers and father of Sardar Bhagat Singh, and Swarna Singh the youngest, took a legitimate share. Though Sardar Kishen Singh did not figure brilliantly on the platform, his services to the cause of the regeneration of the country were more solid. Both the father and the uncles of Bhagat Singh, with the willing consent of the grandfather, contributed generously to the national fund.

The year 1907 saw for the first time in the history of modern India the application of the arbitrary Regulation III of 1818, which has since then rendered so much service to the British Government in India. Both Bengal and Punjab were the scenes of the application of this drastic measure, and Sardar Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai were recipients of this honour. After suffering imprisonment

without trial for about a year in the distant and unhealthy Burma, Sardar Ajit Singh came back to Punjab. It was about the same time that Bhagat Singh's father and uncle, Sardars Kishen Singh and Swarna Singh, were arrested and imprisoned for seditious speeches, and were thus the pioneers in the line. The uncle, Swarna Singh, who was then hardly 28, soon died in the Jail. And this was the propitious time when Sardar Bhagat Singh, the second son of the family, was born, on a Saturday, in October, 1907, in the early hours of the morning. Was it a mere coincidence or the hand of God !

Of his boyhood not much is known except that he loved the field much better than the class room. He, with his eldest brother, Jagat Singh, joined the Primary School at Banga, district Lyallpur, which was his birth place.

Jagat Singh died at the age of 11 years, a loss which was keenly felt by the boy Bhagat Singh. After this Sardar Kishen Singh shifted to Nawankot near Lahore where he had some land. Bhagat Singh had now to be admitted to some High School. Though it was customary for the Sikhs to join the Khalsa High School, Sardar Kishen Singh had no liking for the School owing to the loyalist tendencies of its authorities. So Bhagat Singh joined the D. A. V. School, Lahore. Although the incident is so simple yet it is significant that though a pious Sikh, Bhagat Singh's father withdrew his son from a Sikh institution and preferred an Arya Samajist School. From this School, he passed the Matriculation Examination and joined the National College which is now the building of the Bradlaugh Hall. When he was in the 9th class he went to attend the Cawnpore Congress. While in

the College he was very intimate with Sukhdeo and Yashpal.

When not yet fourteen, Bhagat Singh's enthusiasm for the service of country brought him into touch with some revolutionary organisation in the Punjab. After the failure of the non-cooperation movement in 1921, many impatient youngmen sought to resort to other methods than those advocated by Mahatma Gandhi for the realisation of their ideal. In the Punjab a sect had arisen known as Babbar Akalis. They advocated the use of violent methods for the emancipation of the country Though they resorted to means which may not be approved by many, the Babbar Akalis contained among them some truly noble characters Moreover, the heroic sacrifices of the Sikhs in the Lahore Conspiracy Cases of 1914 and 1915 had great influence on the imaginative youths of



SARDAR ARJUN SINGH

were arrested. It was partly to avoid police scrutiny, partly to find out a new field of activity that Bhagat Singh left the Punjab and went to reside at Cawnpore. Here he came into touch with Sj. Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi, and the two formed a life-long friendship. This was a turning point in his life, as since then he became part and parcel of a well organised revolutionary party in india. Henceforth his life was part of a story of the revolutionary movement in India, and it now behoves us to give some account of this revolutionary organisation to which Bhagat Singh dedicated his heart and soul.

CHAPTER II

THE HINDUSTHAN REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION

It is not the purport here to trace the history of the revolutionary movement in India. Upto 1914 there were scattered secret organisations, mostly in the province of Bengal, but some outside it also. On the outbreak of the World War, the various organisations saw an opportunity to raise the standard of rebellion throughout India. With this purpose, such eminent revolutionaries as Rash Bihari Bose, Jatin Mukherjee, Sachin Sanyal, V. G. Pingley, Sardar Kartar Singh, Thakur Prithwi Singh, Baba Sohan Singh and others joined together and made elaborate plans in conjunction with some Sikh and Rajput regiments to bring about an armed revolution in India. But

as destiny ordained it, the whole plan failed through inner treachery, except a formidable rising at Singapore which was subdued by means of Japanese warships and Japanese mariners. As soon as the authorities got scent of the plan of the revolutionaries, the regiments suspected of complicity in the contemplated risings were disarmed and disbanded, and armed European pickets were posted around them. These soldiers were then sent over to the severest fighting zones in France. The Defence of India Act was at once proclaimed, and more than 7000 persons were arrested in the Punjab, U. P. and Bengal. By 1916 the revolutionary organisations were scorched, though not actually killed.

By this time another influence had appeared in the field of Indian politics in the person of Mahatma Gandhi. His idealism and his sacrifice appealed greatly

to the minds of the youths, many of whom began to join in his non-cooperation movement. But the "Bardoli Retreat," as it was termed by the revolutionaries, and the subsequent set-back in the non-cooperation movement again gave impetus to the revolutionary movement. By 1924 we again see the springing up of secret revolutionary organisations. In Bengal, as usual, the old revolutionaries began to organise again, but a heavy blow was dealt them by the Bengal Ordinance of 1925. In U. P. and the Punjáb, the different parties organised by Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil etc., combined and formed one party. At a meeting at Allahabad, a constitution was adopted and the name of the party became "Hindusthan Republican Association." It was this organisation that Bhagat Singh joined when he shifted to Cawnpore. His

party-name then became "Balwant," under which name he used to contribute articles occasionally to the magazines. Cawnpore was then the head-quarters of Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, or Mr. Roy as his party-name was, was the Chief Organiser of the party and it was under Jogesh Chatterjee that Bhagat Singh began to work.

In 1926 occurred the well-known Kakori train dacoity, in which the members of the H. R A held up a running train at Kakori near Lucknow, and looted the government cash that was being carried in that train Vigorous police investigations into this affair led to ramifications of a wide-spread revolutionary organisation, and the subsequent Kakori Conspiracy Case revealed many of their secrets It was at this time that Bhagat Singh went back to Lahore.

CHAPTER III

PERIOD OF STUDY AND WATCHFULNESS

In the memorable statement in the Delhi Assembly Bomb Case, Sardar Bhagat Singh had declared, "We humbly claim to be serious students of history," and in the course of that statement revealed startling proofs of his wide study and culture It was during the years 1925 and 1926 that Bhagat Singh built up an intellectual reservoir which supplied him material for the rest of his life. He joined the National College founded and run by Lala Lajpat Rai, and devoted himself whole-heartedly to the study of history, politics and economics. Here he had with him two other devoted followers, namely Sukhdeva and

Bhagawati Charan, and the three with one or two others created a study-circle on the model of the Russian Revolutionaries like Tchaikovsky and Kropotkin. The Servants of the People Society generously helped them by indenting for the Dwarka Das Library all such books as were asked for by these ardent revolutionary students.

We have the testimony of such eminent men as Professor Chabil Das of the National College and Mr. Raja Ram, the Librarian of the Dwarka Das Library, as to the eagerness with which Bhagat Singh devoured books. At the National College Library also, under the guidance of Sardar Bhagat Singh, a unique collection grew up. As far as we are aware, we have nowhere seen such a collection of suitable literature. Most up-to-date publications on the history of the Revolutionary period in Italy, Russia and Ireland were procured

and many rare books on the early history of the revolutionary movement in Russia were collected. Unfortunately, on account of the repeated searches and seizures of books, the library at the National College has now dwindled into a tiny collection ; but still what now remains is a good testimony to the genious and perseverance of Sardar Bhagat Singh who was the real guiding spirit in this collection.

Though an ardent and devoted student of politics, Bhagat Singh was not wholly submerged in the mere study of books. He often ran out to different places, attended secret meetings of the revolutionary parties, came into personal contact with the members of the secret organisations in U. P. and Bengal, and carefully watched the progress of the revolutionary party in India. During the trial in the Kakori Conspiracy Case, he



1 —Sar lar s sister with her little child 2—Rajguru's sister 3 – His mother

several times came to Lucknow and established secret communications with the under-trials confined in the District Jail. A suggestion was thrown out by them that something should be done to rescue them from Jail, and Bhagat Singh lent himself whole-heartedly to develop a scheme for this purpose. In this work he twice narrowly escaped being arrested. When ultimately the plan failed, he shifted to Cawnpore again, where he resided for sometime.

It was during his stay at Cawnpore at this time in the beginning of the year 1926, that Bhagat Singh showed signs of his genius as an organiser. As a result of the Kakori Conspiracy Case, the Hindusthan Republican Association had been disorganised. All the leaders were in Jail and the few inexperienced hands remaining outside could not do anything. Bhagat Singh, in conjunction with Bijoy

Kumar Sinha of Cawnpore and Sukhdeo of Lahore, began to organise the remnant of the party in U. P. and the Punjab.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY EFFORTS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The years 1926, 1927 and 1928 may be regarded as depicting a wandering and restless spirit of young Bhagat Singh. The hanging of the four youths in the Kakori Conspiracy Case and the heavy sentences on many others had set a fire to the heart of the emotional youth, and his first impulse was to avenge the death of his dear comrades. In the year 1927 he directed his. energy towards this purpose, but the efforts were mostly unsuccessful.

In order to achieve better results a meeting of the important members of the party was held at Cawnpore sometime in the year 1927, and it was decided there

that the first work of the party would be to organise and consolidate the party. With this aim in view Bhagat Singh and Bijoy Kumar Sinha undertook to tour Punjab, U. P. & Bihar and establish connexions with scattered youths.

But hardly had he commenced work on this line in right earnest when a strange incident occurred which checked his activities for the time being. In October, 1926 a bomb was thrown at Lahore on a dense crowd which had accumulated on the occasion of *Ram-Leela* procession. The Punjab police, by an ingenious argument, convinced themselves that it was the work of the Revolutionary party. It forthwith began to look for an important revolutionary who was at Lahore on that date. As Bhagat Singh admirably suited their purpose, they arrested him and lodged him in the Borstal Jail. For several days h

was locked up in a solitary cell without being produced before a magistrate or getting an opportunity to know why he was arrested. Nevertheless, he got an opportunity to see the inside of that very jail where his comrades, two years and a half later, valiantly fought alongside with him in the memorable hunger strike for the betterment of the lot of the political prisoners.

When the charges were revealed to him he was greatly surprised. To be hauled up any moment for revolutionary conspiracy was a thing to the idea of which he had accustomed himself from boyhood. But to be charged with the heinous offence of killing innocent men and women on a *Mela* day like the *Dussera*, was a thing beyond his dreams. The case dragged on for a long period and the learned magistrate asked him to furnish a security for no less than Rs. 60,000 be-

fore he could be released on bail. There was, ofcourse, not much difficulty in procuring the huge security for such a family as that of Bhagat Singh. After a prolonged litigation, the bond was ultimately cancelled by order of the High Court. The whole episode is a glaring commentary on the methods of the police who thus harassed Bhagat Singh with impunity for a crime with which he had not even the shadow of a connexion.

During the period when he was enlarged on a security of Rs. 60,000 Bhagat Singh could not naturally take part in revolutionary activities. But this period he utilized by taking part in public activities in which he rapidly came to the forefront. Two important things carried out by Bhagat Singh at this period were the organisation of the well-known Nau-Jawan Bharat Sabha and the public demonstrations in connexion with the

hangings of the revolutionaries in the Kakori Conspiracy Case. The first developed into the foremost national organisation of the youths of the Punjab, and considerably influenced the activities of the Congress. The second resulted in the "Kakori Day" celebrations which took place on the day when the four youngmen were hanged a year ago.

While engaged in organising the "Kakori Day" celebrations, an idea came into the mind of Bhagat Singh to deliver public lectures on the lives of the Indian youths who had laid their lives in the Lahore Conspiracy Cases of 1915 and 1916 He set to work and collected photoes from obscure places and got lantern slides made of them. He had an idea of going on a lecture tour througout Northern India in accompaniment with these lantern slides. Though he could not carry out his plan as far as Northern India was

concerned, he organised very successful lectures at Lahore. On the first day of the lantern lecture at Bradlaugh Hall, the whole hall was packed to suffocation and the lectures were listened to with rapt attention. It should be noted, however, that Bhagat Singh was prevented from delivering the lectures himself on account of the huge security. But he instructed his lieutenant, Bhagwati Charan, gave him full materials and provided him with lecture notes. On account of the striking success of these lantern lectures, they were soon prohibited by the Punjab Government. It may be mentioned here that this was the same Bhagwati Charan whose name comes out so prominently in the recent Lahore Conspiracy Case which started on 26th January, 1931, and of whom it is stated that he died while carrying on an experiment in the preparation of bombs on

account of a terrible explosion. He was an absconder in that Lahore Conspiracy Case in which Bhagat Singh and Dutt figured.

Bhagat Singh's idea in organising the Nau-Jawan Bharat Sabha as a distinct from, and in some cases a rival organisation to the Congress should be carefully studied. His study of the poverty question of the world convinced him that the emancipation of India laid not merely in political freedom but in the economic freedom of the masses. Hence the activities of the N. B. Sabha were planned on purely communistic lines. In fact, it was meant to be purely a labourers' and peasants' organisation to which the youths of the country were required to render service.

We thus see a great change in the thought and outlook of Sardar Bhagat Singh. In 1926-27, he was of opinion

that terrorism should be one of the weapons of the revolutionary party. The hangings in the Kakori Case, inspite of the powerful appeals of the legislators and concillors for a commutation, made him a convinced terrorist. But his deeper study of the problems of India, which were to him identical with those of the world, led him to change his opinion. During his study at the National College, Lahore, he was gradually converted to socialism, and he began to look up to Russia as the state which came up nearest to his ideal.

CHAPTER V

THE HINDUSTHAN SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION

As soon as Bhagat Singh was unfettered from the shackles of a huge security, he plunged headlong into revolutionary activities. In a short time he galvanized the moribund organisation which, in-spite of the Cawnpore resolution, had been in a state of decay.

At this time the party was scattered into groups in different cities with no definite programme or scheme of work before them. Such groups were in existence at Lahore, Delhi ; Cawnpore, Benares and Allahabad in U. P., and at a few places in Bihar. Sometimes in July, 1928 a preliminary meeting was

held at Cawnpore and it was decided there that important representative members were to be called together to form a Central Committee.

According to this decision, Bhagat Singh and Bijoy Kumar Sinha began to tour about the country, and in September 1928, an important meeting was held at Purana Qila, Delhi. Two or three representatives each from Bihar, U. P., Punjab and Rajputana were called together, and the meeting continued for two days.

In this meeting Bhagat Singh took his stand as a socialist worker, and under his forceful arguments the programme was drawn up on socialistic principles. Henceforth murder of police-officials or approvers, which actions were very dear to many members of the party, was relegated to the back ground. From now only such actions were contemplated as

would lead to mass awakening and mass action.

Bhagat Singh also urged for changing the name of the party from Hindusthan Republican Association to Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association. The proposal was at first stoutly opposed by representatives from U. P. who declared that the name adopted by such well-known revolutionary leaders as Ram Prasad Bismil, Sachin Sanyal and Jogesh Chatterjee has acquired a good deal of prestige, and it should not be changed. But ultimately Bhagat Singh's proposal was accepted.

At this meeting it was further decided that the organisation should be broadly divided into two groups, the active group and the sympathisers. The active group would be engaged in collecting arms and ammunition, in carrying out plans of terrorism, and would try to develop group

actions into mass actions. This group would be known as Hindusthan Socialist Republican Army. It would be the work of the sympathisers to collect money by personal contribution and by public subscription, to arrange for the shelter of the members of the active group and to carry on propaganda.

A Central Committee was constituted, with two members each from U. P., the Punjab and Bihar and one member from Rajputana. Bhagat Singh became an active and important member of the Committee, and Bijoy Kumar Sinha was incharge of maintaining inter provincial link. The Head-quarters of the party was established at Jhansi in charge of Sj. Kundan Lal who was the representative of Rajputana in the Central Committee. Chandra Shekhar Azad, an absconder in half a dozen political cases including the Kakori Case, and who died

so valiantly in an engagement with the police in the Alfred Park, Allahabad on 27th February, 1931 was head of the active group, that is, the army. Bhagat Singh had the unique position of being one of the leaders in the active group and also a vigorous propagandist.

It was also decided in the same meeting that members of the H. S. R. Army should leave home and cut off connexions with the family, and should divert their whole energy towards work for the party. As religious sectarianism was also tabooed, Bhagat Singh had to divest himself of all outward symbols of Sikhism, *i. e.*, he had to cut his hair short and to shave.

Shortly, the head-quarters of the party was shifted from Jhansi to Agra. Here, two houses were taken on rent, and many young men, after leaving home

and relatives, came there and lived together. The young men lived in utter poverty, for the party was always in need of funds. At one time, for three continuous days and nights, there was absolutely nothing to eat except a cup of tea. In the terrible winter nights of Agra, they had only two or three blankets to share between 8 or 9 men, with practically no beding. Though Bhagat Singh was accustomed to live a luxurious life at home, yet he never for a moment felt unhappy under these trying circumstances.

With his ever-increasing zest for study, Bhagat Singh began to build up a small library at Agra. With this purpose he roamed about, begging for books from sympathisers. In a short time a distinctive though small library grew up here, and the most important section among the books was ofcourse, Economics.



1—Mrs Sardar Swarna Singh (Aunt) 2—Shrimati Vidyawati (mother) 3—His grand mother and
4—Mrs Sardar Ajit Singh (Aunt) The girl sitting on floor is the sister of the late Sardar

Bhagat Singh's study of and discussions on Socialism went on unabated In the whole party he was perhaps second to none in the vastness and depth of study While studying general literature, he often used to get by heart striking and beautiful passages, and in the Jail during the Lahore Conspiracy Case he often enlivened and brightened up his fellow-comrades by reproducing beautiful passages from memory

CHAPTER VI

THE SAUNDERS MURDER

We have now to relate an historical occurrence which played such a deciding part in the life of Sardar Bhagat Singh. We need not here dwell on the history of the appointment of the Simon Commission in the teeth of universal opposition in India, or the subsequent nation-wide boycott of the same. The demonstrations in connexion with the boycott of Simon Commission aroused much popular enthusiasm.

After visiting many places, the Commission was to arrive at Lahore on 30th October, 1928. A very big procession was organised at Lahore to boycott the Simon Commission. But the Government

Officials had proclaimed the application of Sec. 144, and the police were ordered to prevent any demonstration. There was a clash between the processionists and the police, and many Congress workers, including Lala Lajpat Rai, were beaten by the police. Sometime afterwards, Lala Lajpat Rai died on 17th November. . The people believed that Lalaji's death was due to the beating he had received. Mr. Scott, the Senior Superintendent of Police Lahore, was held responsible for the Police beating and Mr. Saunders, an assistant Superintedent of police, was popularly regarded as connected with the beating of Lalaji. On the evening of 17th December, 1928, Mr. Saunders was murdered just before the Police Office, Chanan Singh, a constable, who wanted to pursue the assailants, was also murdered, after which the culprits escaped and could not be traced.

Next morning the police discovered several posters pasted on walls at different places in the city, with the bold printed heading in red : "The Hindusthan Socialist Republican Army," below which was written out in thick letters: "Saunders is dead, Lalaji is avenged," and some other matter in justification of the action.

Such is the bare outline history of the incident. From the narrative of Jai Gopal, an approver in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, we can reconstruct the whole story.

Ever since the day of Lala Lajpat Rai's death, the Punjab group was considering the plan of avenging the death of Lalaji by killing the Police Officers who were reponsible for Lalaji's beating that led ultimately to his death. They had two-fold object in this: first to give the popular movement a turn towards

violence, and second, to show to the world that Lalaji's beating was not taken lying by India. The action was incidentally to advertise the existence of a revolutionary party in India.

For this purpose it was decided that Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru should attempt on the life of Mr. Scott, the S. S. P., with revolvers. Pt. Chandra Shekhar Azad the absconder in the Kakori Conspiracy Case of 1926, was to direct the whole action and to work as a rear guard.

The whole plot was carefully thought out and complete arrangements were made for the same. Originally, it was the intention of these three youths to fight out a pitched battle with the police, and if possible, to lay down their lives fighting. In this idea they were inspired by the story of Jotindre Nath Mukherjee and his associates who, instead of flying before the police and save their skin,

boldy faced them and in a pitched revolver fight, laid down their lives, sometime in 1916. They believed that in this way they would be able to rouse up the imagination of the youth and bring them into the ranks of the revolutionaries.

But the plan failed in two respects. Instead of Mr. Scott they murdered Mr. Saunders. Then, as the police did not follow them up, their desire for a pitched fight could not be fulfilled. Only one Police Officer, namely Mr. Fern, came out of the Police Office after the shots had been fired that killed Mr. Saunders. But two bullets whirling by his head proved too strong an argument for returning back. Only Chanan Singh dared to follow them up. He was entreated to give up the chase; but on his refusing to do so, he was also killed by bullet shots.

The three then went to the D. A. V. College Boarding House, which was in

close proximity to the Police Office, waiting for the police to appear. But when nobody came, they returned to their place of shelter on two bicycles, one of which was taken as a forced loan from a cycle dealer.

No sooner had Bhagat Singh and his party left the D. A. V. College Boarding House, the police appeared on the scene in full force, surrounded the boarding house, began to search every nook and corner, and blocked all exits and entrances. Not only that. Strong police force was posted on all roads leading in and out of Lahore, the railway stations became full of C. I. D. men, and all young men leaving Lahore were carefully scrutinised. But the three young men frustrated all the attempts of the police and safely got away from Lahore.

The stratagem that Bhagat Singh adopted was as clever as it was bold.

He dressed up as a young Government Official, adopted a big official name, put labels of that name on his trunks and portmanteaux, and in the company of a beautiful lady, entrained a first class compartment at the Central Railway Station in the face of those very C. I. D. Officials who were specially deputed to arrest the assassin of Mr. Saunders. He had a fully dressed orderly in the person of Rajguru, with the inevitable tiffin carrier in his hand ; ofcourse, all were fully armed for all emergency.

Chandra Sekhar Azad adopted a simple method. He got up a pilgrim-party for Muttra, with old ladies and gentlemen, and in the capacity of a Brahmin Pandit in an orthodox style, escorted them,—and himself—out of Lahore !

CHAPTER VII

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

As Bhagat Singh was a *persona grata* with the C. I. D Police, their first hypothesis included his name as a probable culprit So they began to hunt for him. But since the security bonds were cancelled by the High Court, the police could not get any clue of Bhagat Singh. In confidential circulars to Police Officers, instructions were laid down to arrest him whenever he could be found. Special Police Officers were deputed to trace out his whereabouts. Police-constables who knew him were posted at big junctions, and a strict watch was kept by the Railway Police.

Inspite of such extreme measures, Bhagat Singh roamed about undaunted. The success of the Saunders murder had brought prestige to the party, and it created much sensation among the students. Henceforth, monetary conditions of the party began to improve. On the very night when the murder was committed, the group of the few young men who lived in a rented house in Lahore had run so short of money that they could not arrange for light at night. But in a few days they began to receive subscriptions which removed their pecuniary want for the time being.

The Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress was now about to begin, and it was decided that Bhagat Singh and Bijoy Kumar Sinha should go there to study situation, and to establish connexion withthe Bengal Revolutionary Party. Since the arrests in U.P. in con-

nexion with the Kakori Case and the rigorous application of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act in Bengal, the connexion between U. P. and Bengal had been broken. The Deoghar Conspiracy Case broke the last link in the chain.

There was not much difficulty for Bhagat Singh to get entrance into the inner circle of the revolutionary organisations in Bengal. He was very much impressed to meet the veteran leaders of the movement, who had spent the greater portion of their lives in Jail. But he found that they had no faith in the methods adopted by Bhagat Singh and his party in U. P. and the Punjab. In one thing only they all agreed, namely the ultimate necessity of an armed revolution to bring about freedom of the country. But in other matters, such as the need of a socialistic outlook, the place of terrorism in the party pro-

gramme, the need of secrecy,' etc., they differed widely.

His conversations with some old terrorists opened out to him the need of manufacturing bombs. With this purpose in view he began to look out for a trained expert who could teach their party the complete process in the manufacture of bombs. With some difficulty he secured the services of an expert. At first he hesitated, saying that as a member of the Revolutionary Party of Bengal, he was under the discipline of the party leaders who disapproved of the manufacture or use of bombs. But Bhagat Singh ultimately convinced him that what might be true for Bengal was not true for U. P. or the Punjab, and that the manufacture and use of bombs would be restricted to those provinces, thereby leaving Bengal in peace to work out its programme.

Besides arranging for the manufacture of bombs, Bhagat Singh was able to come into personal touch with the newly recruited members of the Bihar branch of H. S. R. Association. A new centre was established at Calcutta incharge of a Behari member. An assylum was also established here to give shelter to absconders.

On account of the sympathetic attitude of the dealers, the necessary materials and chemicals for the manufacture of bombs were easily procured. It was decided that the preparations should be done at Agra, where a new house was rented for this purpose. The bomb-expert arrived at the appointed time, and taught the complete process to a select group. For the next two months, the party remained engaged in the manufacture of these deadly weapons. Besides Agra, Lahore and Saharanpur were also used as bomb manufacturing centres.

Two of the first batch of bombs that were manufactured at Agra were taken to Jhansi where they were exploded for the purpose of experimenting their bursting capacity. The members seemed to have been quite satisfied with the results.

At this time one of the members of the party fell seriously ill which ultimately proved to be a virulent type of smallpox. Bhagat Singh and his comrades nursed him day and night, regardless of the risks involved to themselves. It was mainly due to the careful nursing of these young men that his life was saved. But, strange to say, it was the same man who turned out an approver within a short time of his arrest, and implicated the very same comrades who had done so much to save his life during his severe illness.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ASSEMBLY BOMB OUTRAGE

On the eighth of April, 1929, the royal city of Delhi witnessed one of the most colourful spectacles that it is ever destined to see, when two representatives of the Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association entered unnoticed the Assembly Chamber and threw two bombs towards the seats occupied by Government Officials. With deafening noise the bombs exploded and covered the room with dense smoke. The benches near which the bombs fell were broken to pieces, and a portion of the floor was also hollowed out. But, except for a few minor scratches, no one received any injury.

The scene presented by the Assembly Chamber immediately after the explosion beggars descriptions. There was a rush towards the adjoining room where gallant members fled as if pursued by the very devil. It was reported that even lavatories were not free from these gentlemen who sought refuge in every nook and corner of the building.

Amidst these mirthful scenes a few members remained unnerved, foremost amongst whom were Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and as truth must be spoken, Sir James Crerar. The visitors' gallery also presented a deserted appearance. But lo! towards this official benches, midway between the central gate and the ladies' gallery could be seen two young men, undaunted and calm, as if diving deep into a vision of the future! They are the two



BHAGAT SINGH'S MOTHER
SHRIMATI VIDYAWATI



BHAGAT SINGH'S GRAND MOTHER

historic figures, Sardar Bhagat Singh and Sj. Batukeswar Dutt.

The occasion for exploding the bombs on the floor of the Legisiative Assembly Hall was also very important. Owing to a militant type of labour agitation in Bombay, and the success attending the agitation, the Government thought it advisable to hurry through the assembly a bill which would have worked as a check to labour agitation.

How Bhagat Singh and Dutt could enter the Council Chamber unobserved by the police sergeants posted at the gates has remained a mystery to the police. Their surprise will be the greater when they will learn that they got entrance not only on that particular date, but that they had been going into Assembly Hall for the last 3 or 4 days, as was the fact. This was possible for two reasons, first, because they were smartly

dressed in European costume, and as such, did not arouse suspicion; and second, because they had procured visitors' passes. For three days continually, they went into the hall, with a fully charged bomb in one pocket and a loaded revolver in another. They observed and waited for the most psychological moment, and when the time came, they calmly carried out their plan as if it was nothing more serious than lighting a match box.

We want to emphasize here the fact that there was ample opportunity for both of them to make good their escape, if they so desired. It was part of a deliberate plan that they calmly surrendered to the police and thereby consciously and willingly offered themselves for that terrible penalty which was inevitable after the commission of an act of that nature.

Each of them had a fully loaded revolver, and if they so wished, they could have utilised these to kill many Government Officials who were running helter skelter in different directions. But they did nothing of the sort. They took out their revolvers, and before the eyes of the police sergeants who had hurried to the spot, put them down on the adjoining chairs. Then they shouted out, both together : "Long Live the Revolution," "Down with Imperialism," cries which were uttered for the first time in India by them and which soon became the universal cry of the youths of India. Simultaneously with these shouts they began to throw out bundles of a red leaflet with the title, "The Hindusthan Socialist Republican Army" and a spirited appeal typewritten on the red letter-head. These letter-heads were the same as were used on the occasion of the

Saunders Murder Case. "It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear," began the appeal, and quoting the instance of the French anarchist, Valliant, they justified their act, and urged : "Let the representatives of the people return to their constituencies and prepare the masses for the coming revolution."

Immediately with the throwing out of these leaflets, two police sergeants and a number of constables arrived on the spot and took Bhagat Singh and Dutt into custody. But before they disappeared from the arena, they again shouted, "Long live the Revolution", and "Down with Imperialism", which reverberated through the hall and astonished the bewildered spectators.

CHAPTER IX

THE ASSEMBLY BOMB OUTRAGE (Contd)

As the Assembly Bomb Outrage is the most important event not only in the life of Sardar Bhagat Singh, but also in the history of Revolutionary India, it needs to be discussed and explained in fuller detail. What we have explained in the foregoing chapter is a matter of common history. But it is necessary to relate the things that happened behind the screen so that one may arrive at a proper historical perspective.

The Central Committee of the Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association, while planning the murder of Mr. Scott, thought not only of the punishment they

would inflict on the person who was responsible for the ignominious lathi blows on the great national leader, but they laid greater stress on the fight that they anticipated. They built up in their imagination a picture of Bhagat Singh, riddled with police bullets, captured after a gallant fight. Regarding this picture as an inevitable consequence, they had planned that Bhagat Singh would make a bold statement, ennunciating the principles of the revolutionary party, reiterating the revolutionary faith, and with one step in the gallows, would send forth an appeal to the youths of the country They believed that such an appeal would have immense effect in furthering the cause of the revolutionary party.

When these anticipated consequences did not come about, they began to think of something else. At this time the Labour Unions of Bombay were engaged

in a strenuous struggle with the mill-owners. Suddenly the Government of India launched a campaign against the socialist workers and a number of them were arrested at different parts of the country. Soon it became known that the authorities wanted to prosecute them in what is known as the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

Hardly had the agitation in connexion with these arrests subsided when the Government brought in the Trades Dispute Bill. The labourites perceived that this bill, if passed would have disastrous effects on Trade Union movement.

The revolutionary party was eager for such an opportunity. At the headquarter of the H. S. R. A. at Agra there was discussion every day, and Bhagat Singh urged the party to take such action by which they could show the solidarity of the H. S R. A. with the labour and peasant movements. Subsequently, at a

meeting of the party held at Delhi, it was decided that B. K. Dutt and another person should go and attack the official benches in the Legislative Assembly with bombs.

We reproduce below portions from the statement of Hansraj Vora, an approver in the Lahore Conspiracy Case as recorded in the proceedings in the Magistrate's court on 26th of November 1929. These will clearly explain the whole thing.

"Two or three days after the Assembly Bomb Outrage, Sukhdeva again met witness (Hansraj, approver) near the canal. At that time Sukhdeva showed him the photographs of Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt, and informed him that the party, at its Delhi meeting, had decided that Bhagat Singh and Dutt were to surrender themselves to the police so that they might be able to expound thereby the revolutionary creed and philosophy

by means of a statement in the court. According to Sukhdeva, the object of throwing bombs in the Assembly, was that they might be able to show their 'protest' against the unjustifiable provisions of the Trades Dispute Bill and the Public Safety Bill. But they had no intention of killing anybody. The bombs were deliberately kept weak, so that even if their explosion did some harm to the Government benches, no harm might come to the Congress leaders."

As stated above, Bhagat Singh was not the person chosen to accompany B. K. Dutt in the Assembly Outrage. But a very great personal friend of Bhagat Singh urged him to do so, stating that Bhagat Singh would be the fittest person to do it. The reply that he wrote, giving his consent to the proposal, reveals a softer side of his character. To outward appearance Bhagat Singh seemed some-

what unemotional, as if devoid of feelings. But the letter that he wrote to this life-long companion breathes a rare feeling of love and emotion. Sure of a permanent parting, Bhagat Singh poured out the innermost feelings of his heart in that jewel of a letter. As, while writing the letter, he himself felt submerged in a feeling of love, he saw a vision of the task that lay before him, and thus he must have felt the conflict of his feeling of love and his sense of duty. In the letter he dilates upon the theme and quotes instances from Stepniak's Career of a Nihilist, one of his favourite books. In the letter he reiterates his conviction that love is incompatible for the life of a revolutionary. Unfortunately, this valuable letter was seized by the police at the Mozang House Bomb Factory at Lahore and is now in their possession.

By Bhagat Singh's genius, the trial of the Assembly Bomb Case was fully utilised to further the cause of the party. It was Bhagat Singh and Dutt who for the first time raised shouts of "Long Live Revolution," "Long Live Proletariat" in the open court of Delhi for which both of them were kept handcuffed in the court as long as the trial lasted. Moreover, they took up the bold stand of declaring themselves to be members of of the revolutionary party, and boldly sent out their message by a statement in the court that the Indians should devote themselves to the organisation of labour and peasant parties so that a real Swaraj for the masses might be brought about.

The important statement made in the Court of Sessions was very cleverly managed. Even before they had made that historic statement, typed copies of

it were broadcast to all the important newspapers, and without going through the telegraph office, where it must have been curtailed and mutilated, the full statement was simultaneously published in all the leading newspapers of India. Nay, it was sent outside India also, and important extracts were published in some newspapers in Ireland, in *La Humanite* of Paris and *Pravda* of Russia.

The effect of this statement on the youth and the public was electrical. The very public leaders who had condemned the outrage before now began to modify their statements. These were not a few papers and public men who began to appreciate the motive of the youths.

Soon the Nau-Jawan Bharat Sabha, founded by Bhagat Singh himself, took up the cause of publicity work for the Assembly Bomb Outrage Case. The statement made by Bhagat Singh

and Dutt was printed in hundreds of thousands, with the familiar pictures of the two youths, and distributed all over India. Short biographies with printed copies of their photos were supplied free to a few leading newspapers that gladly undertook to circulate them. In short, the Assembly action completely fulfilled the intentions of the perpetrators and the Central Committee of the Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association; it created the prestige of the two representatives of the H. S. R. A. ; the party came into prominence, and the whole affair roused the imagination of the youth.

In view of the importance of the statement we have given some important extracts from it in the Appendix. We have also given there Bhagat Singh's rejoinder to the Modern Review which criticised the cry of "Long Live Revolution" as nonsensical.

CHAPTER X

THE HUNGER STRIKE

Bhagat Singh's declaration of hunger strike to ameliorate the lot of political prisoners, coming as it did in quick succession to the life-sentences in the Assembly Bomb Case, added to the causes that contributed to his influence on the public. There were hunger strikes before, by political prisoners, some of which ended fatally. But, except in the case of the prisoners in the Kakori Conspiracy Case, these hunger strikes were undertaken to redress particular grievances. It was Bhagat Singh's hunger strike which first diverted the attention of the public to the need of the amelio-

ration of the lot of political prisoners as a class

Before the sentences had been passed by the Sessions Judge, both Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt had decided up on a hunger strike inorder to bring about a change in the so rigours jail life of the political prisoners He was able to communicate their decision to the Press which geniously came forward to help them by carrying on an agitation in favour of the demand

Perhaps the average reader has no idea of the hardships that prisoners are subjected to the jail One fact alone is enuogh to bring home the seriousness of the suffering In the Benares Conspiracy Case (1916), of the eleven persons con victed, three died in jail and one turned mad The writer, who was convicted in that case had an opportunity to see the

special orders (ofcourse it was confidential) of the Inspector General of Prisons in respect of their treatment As far as he remembers, the wordings were—"To be kept apart day and night from all other prisoners" The implication is simple as a jail is inhabited by prisoners, a political prisoner has to suffer solitary confinement for the whole of his term of imprisonment For a social man, no other sentence is more horrible

In a Bengali book recently published, named, "Ten years in the Andamans" the writer who was convicted in the famous Barisal Conspiracy Case, has narrated many horrors to which political prisoners were subjected in the Andamans Bhagat Singh was well conversant with these details For himself he had not the slightest apprehension To whatever Indian jail he might be transferred, he was sure to receive special and



1—Sardar Kishen Singh 2—Shrimati Amar Kaur 3—Shrimat
Sarla Devi and 4—the mother of the late Rajguru The boy
sitting on the floor is Sardar Kultar Singh—the younger
brother of Sardar Bhagat Singh.

considerate treatment. Moreover, by this time he had learnt of the tidings of the forth-coming conspiracy case, and he also knew from certain identification parades that the prosecution wanted to lay the Saunder's murder at his door. Hence he had absolutely no personal advantages to hope for from a successful hunger strike. But he really felt very greatly for those workers in the same field who were pining away their days in British Prisons.

For two days after their conviction Dutt and Singh were kept together in the Delhi Jail, after which the former was transferred to Lahore Central Jail while Bhagat Singh was sent to the dreary jail at Meanwali. While at Delhi both were receiving European class treatment. Before they had quitted the Delhi Jail, they launched into that other struggle which attracted the attention

of the Indian public for the next four months.

In his demands for the better treatment of political prisoners, Bhagat Singh purposely kept his pitch low. He put forth what may be regarded as the minimum demands with an eye to the possibility of their fulfilment. In entering into the struggle, therefore, his purpose was a practical one, namely, to achieve something concrete for the unfortunate political prisoners and not to enter into an idealistic fight for an idealistic cause. Bhagat Singh demanded that all persons who are convicted of offences that are actuated by political motives, and not for any personal gain or object, should be regarded as political prisoners who should be allowed facilities for study, newspaper, better diet, and association of all political prisoners with each other. It was only later, after the

immortal Jatindra Nath Das had entered into the arena, that the fight began to assume the latter aspect, and the more the hunger strike with its attendant misery and agony prolonged, the more idealism began to enter into the fight.

The authorities had no idea of the stuff that they had to deal with. They thought that the pangs of hunger would be sufficient to induce Bhagat Singh to discontinue it But the hunger strike went on unabated. Full one month after the declaration of hunger strike, the Punjab Government began to move in this matter. By this time the trial in the Lahore Conspiracy Case had commenced and the undertrials threw in their weight with Bhagat Singh and Dutt by declaring a sympathetic hunger strike on 13th July, 1929.

The story of the hunger strike of the undertrials in the Lahore Conspiracy Case

is a subject on which a separate volume can be, and ought to be written. In a short time the attention of the whole country was drawn to the heroic struggle of the Lahore hunger-strikers. Before the forces of public opinion and the gallant hunger-strike, even the Punjab Government began to yield gradually. On 14th of July, on the very day that Sardar Bhagat Singh sent a special application to the Home Member to the Government of India, the Punjab Government came out with their first communique, allowing some facilities in the diet for the undertrials in the Lahore Conspiracy Case on medical grounds. Ofcourse, this was nothing. Soon after, a second Government communique was published, deleting the words 'on medical grounds' from their first communique, and extending the facility to Bhagat Singh and Dutt, the two convicted undertrials.

On 28th July, when Jatin Das's condition became serious, Bhagat Singh sent a special message through a prominent Congressman that the undertrials in the Borstal Jail might suspend the hunger strike, leaving the battle to Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar alone. This shows his self-sacrificing mentality.

The condition of Jatin Das had gone still worse. He refused even to take enema. His whole system had become poisoned, and he could not even open eyes. The well-wishers of the hunger strikers, prominent Congressmen and members of the Lahore Conspiracy Case Defence Committee emplored and entreated, but Das remained adamant to his purpose. A message was sent to the Governor of the Punjab that if Das paid any heed to anybody, that was to Bhagat Singh's words, and Bhagat Singh might be persuaded to plead with Jatin for

allowing enema to be given. The Governor atonce permitted that Bhagat Singh might be brought over from the Central Jail to the Borstal Jail so that he might try to persuade Das. Bhagat Singh's immense influence was atonce demonstrated when Jatin yielded to the former's entreaties, and agreed to take enema. The doctor's report was that this enema prolonged Das's life by at least a fortnight. The jail authorities, who had left no stone unturned to achieve this very object, were astonished. The Deputy Superintendent of the Borstal Jail, Khan Sahib Khair Din, asked of Jatin in wonder as to why he so easily consented to the very same proposal of Bhagat Singh, to which he had turned a deaf-ear when it came from the jail people. Jatin gravely replied—"Khan Sahib, you do not know; Bhagat Singh is a brave man ; I can not dishonour his words."

On a similar occasion, when the results of the Punjab Jail Enquiry Committee were within sight, it was Bhagat Singh who was able to persuade Das to take medicine so that he might linger on till he had opportunity to examine the results of the Punjab Jail Enquiry Committee. With disjointed words which were hardly audible, he said to Sardarji,—"Bhagat Singh, though I feel and I am convinced that I ought not to swerve from my vow, yet I can not but accede to your request. Please do not ask anything more from me again!"

When the hunger strikers were about to suspend their hunger strike, Bhagat Singh insisted that the first condition would be for the Government to release Das unconditionaliy. All the members of the Jail Enquiry Committee unanimously agreed to this. But the Government did not release Das and consequently Bhagat

Singh, Dutt and four others again went on hunger strike. But their prolonged misery had no effect and meanwhile Das died.

As Bhagat Singh and others thought that what had been promised by the Punjab Jail Enquiry Committee would be sufficient for the first fight, the hunger strike was unanimously suspended.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE

The more one examines the proceedings of the Lahore Conspiracy Case, the more one is impressed by the subtle policy of Bhagat Singh and his comrades. The Lahore Conspiracy Case cost the Government very dearly, because by means of this very trial, Bhagat Singh and others achieved to a very great extent those very things which the Government dreaded so much.

As soon as the hunger strike was over and the proper trial was expected to begin, Bhagat Singh formed a small group of three members, namely, he himself, Sukhdeva and Bijoy Kumar Sinha, which began to think as to how best to

realise the aims of their party by utilising this very trial. They determined that the whole proceedings should be so conducted as to best serve to propagate their ideas, aims, objects and methods.

First of all, they had to fight for the preliminary rights of the undertrials. Hitherto, the political undertrials were treated as if they were no better than ordinary criminals. By the persistent efforts of the undertrials, which were often attended with great hardships, they were able to exact an honourable treatment from the authorities. Comfortable chairs, newspapers, tables, lunching tents were gradually provided for, and *de facto* recognition was given to the fact that they were nothing less than patriots.

Another fight was raged for the admission of visitors. The trial took place inside the Lahore Central Jail and such restrictions and impediments were put

in the way of admission of visitors that very few could get admission. This was about to frustrate the very aim of Bhagat Singh and others, that is, to influence the public by the proceedings. So after a struggle of a month or so, in which the undertrials resorted to all sorts of tactics most of these hindrances were removed, and numerous visitors, mostly youngmen and ladies began to attend the Court regularly The influence of the proceedings—which commenced everyday with the slogans "Long Live Revolution," "Long Live Proletariat", "Down, Down with Imperialism," and a national song in chorus—on the visitors can be readily realised from the fact that there were not less than half-a-dozen political conspiracy cases in the Punjab in which it has been definitely proved that the youngmen complicated in those cases were actuated and inspired by what they

heard in the court of the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

During the proceedings, the cross-examination of the important witnesses, especially the approvers, was undertaken by the undertrials themselves. The object of these cross-examinations was never to attempt to bring out the discrepancies and lies in the statements of the approvers ; they were undertaken solely with the purpose of bringing on the record, and thereby before the public, the aims and objects of the party, the inner motive of particular action, the heroic side of their struggle, and the details of the methods they had adopted. Thus they wanted that the proceedings in their case should serve the purpose of training and inspiring the youths.

Whenever any opportunity arose for demonstration, the undertrials never let it slip. Thus, there were demonstrations

in the open court on the "Kakori Day", "Lenin Day", "First May", "Lajpat Rai Day", and on particular occasions such as the death of Shyamaji Krishna Varma, the death of a political prisoner due to hunger strike in Hungary, and such others. On such occasions they always managed to give out a message. The Prosecution allowed to get these messages on record, because they thought that these would implicate the undertrials themselves and would furnish good 'proofs' against them. The undertrials, who cared little about the proofs or evidence, gladly availed themselves of these opportunities.

One memorable event in the course of the trial in the Magistrate's court was the attempt to handcuff the prisoners in the court. This was the occasion: Jai Gopal, an approver in the case entered the dock with overbearing attitude. He

twisted his moustache and threw out some taunting remarks towards the accused. While the others cried 'Shame' 'Shame', Prem Dutt, the youngest of the accused, flung out his slipper on the approver. Atonce the proceedings were adjourned, and a standing order was passed that the accused should remain handcuffed while in the court. Bhagat Singh and others at once determined that, come what may, they would never attend the court unless the order was rescinded.

The next day, inspite of the full physical force that the police could employ, they failed to bring to the court one single accused. Out of the 16 persons, only five could be brought in the lorry upto the jail gate, but then nothing could bring them out of the lorry. The next day they consented to come to the court with handcuffs on the understand-

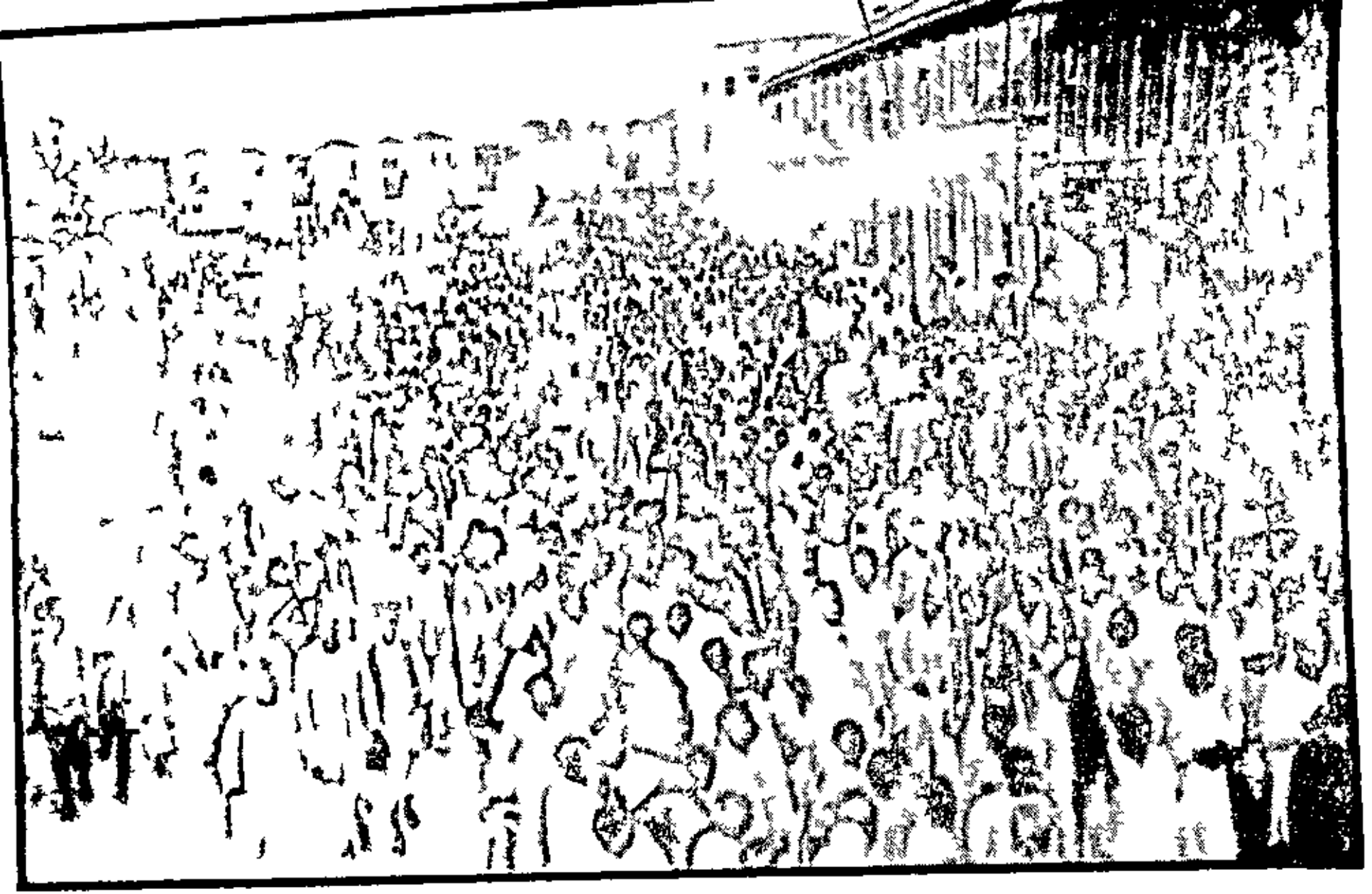
ing that these would be removed. But when this was not done they resorted to a stratagem. When lunch time came they applied that the handcuffs might be removed to enable them to participate in the lunch. After the lunch was over, the Police Officers came to put on the handcuffs again They flatly refused to be done so Then began a scuffle, and the court was converted into a pandemonium. Special Pathan force was requisitioned, and a merciless beating began.

In this beating Bhagat Singh was specially singled out Eight ferocious Pathans fell upon him and booted kicks and sticks were abundantly showered on him. This, done before the very eyes of the visitors which included a fair number of ladies, had a tremendous effect, and the same evening a big meeting was held at Lahore in which the action of

the police was vehemently criticised. The same was the opinion of almost all the nationalist newspapers.

Not content with the beating in the court, the police again commenced their game in the afternoon when the court rose. They fell on Sardar Bhagat Singh in the jail yard, and a most cruel thrashing commenced. However, these terrible sufferings had the desired effect. The police authorities submitted a report, to which the jail authorities concurred, that it is possible to beat them and even kill them, but it was not possible to bring them to court. As a result, the Magistrate had to rescind his order.

The Lahore Conspiracy Case gained unprecedented publicity throughout India, and even beyond India. Subscriptions began to flow in from distant parts of the world. A lady from Poland sent a remittance with a request that detailed



A view of the mourning procession in memorium of the late Sardar which paraded in Karachi during the Congress

proceedings might be sent to her regularly. Donations came from Japan, Canada, and even distant South America. Bhagat Singh—Dutt days were celebrated in different parts of the country, and their portraits were widely used in calendars.

In the Magistrate's court, many distinguished public leaders paid visits to the undertrials, notable among them being Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose, Baba Gurudutt Singh, Mr. K. F. Nariman, the Raja of Kalakankar, Mr. R. A. Kidwai, Mr. Mohan Lal Saxena, and lastly, our great revered leader, the late Pandit Moti Lal Nehru. Moti Lalji went to see them twice ; the second time he entered the dock of the accused and remained closeted with them for about an hour.

The writer would have very much liked to publish the important conversation that ensued between Moti Lalji and Sardar Bhagat Singh, but expediency

demands silence on this matter. He hopes that time may come when it would be possible to do it.

As the Government began to perceive the tremendous effect the Lahore Conspiracy Case trial was having on the youth of the country, they felt nervous and began to think a way out of it. Ultimately they hit upon the Lahore Conspiracy Case Ordinance. At first the Government of India did not accept the proposal for its enactment made by the Punjab Government, for fear of public agitation. But when the fight between the Congress and the Government began and the latter began to resort to one arbitrary ordinance after another, the question of popular resentment did not count, and this extra-ordinary ordinance was promulgated as Ordinance IV of 1930.

Bhagat Singh and others atonce perceived that they had gained a good point

by exposing the hollowness of British justice. They had already succeeded in doing a sufficient amount of propaganda on behalf of the revolutionary party. By promulgating this extraordinary piece of legislature at this belated hour, the Government only played into their hands. So in a meeting of the under-trials, Bhagat Singh proposed that from now they should adopt true revolutionary attitude by refusing to take cognisance of the court. A hot discussion ensued, and two divergent notes were heard in the meeting. One group adhered to Bhagat Singh's views, another group urged that they should participate in the proceedings so that when the time came they might make bold statements like what Bhagat Singh made in the Assembly Case. Bhagat Singh urged that in the face of such terrible sentences as hanging and transportation for life, if they showed

utter unconcern and refused to be a party to what be termed a force, then the moral effect of such attitude would be very great on the younger generation. The others argued that as the revolutionary party had no platform of their own, they should utilise the Court Proceedings to serve this purpose.

But the question was settled in a strange way. As in the lower court, so in the tribunal also, they entered the court shouting their revolutionary slogans, and the proceedings could not commence until they had sung a national song. This was very much resented by the three judges of the tribunal, and after three or four days, they asserted their authority by ordering the police to handcuff the accused as soon as they had finished their song. The scene encated in the lower court was repeated and the court proceedings had to be terminated that day.

This humiliating treatment enraged the other group also and they unanimously decided to refuse to go to court. The police and jail authorities, with their previous experience, declared that it would not be possible to bring the accused to court and the proceedings had to be conducted *ex-parte*. Thus Bhagat Singh's wishes were completely realised. The Government, in order to keep up a show of justice, tried to induce the accused to attend court; they even went so far as to change the President whom the accused declared to be responsible for the beating and insult in the court; but nothing suceeded.

CHAPTER XII

THE JUDGMENT AND AFTER

On the morning of 7th October, 1930, a special messenger came to the jails from the court of the Special Tribunal. As the accused did not attend the court, the court order regarding sentences were sent through this special messenger. Three of these orders were marked with black border; these were the warrants of execution of Sukhdeva, Shivaram Rajguru and Sardar Bhagat Singh.

The day of the announcement of judgment was kept a dead secret. Three days ago there had been a last dinner in the jail in which even some of the jail

officials were present, and farewell addresses were delivered. Three more days passed—days of tension and excitement. The prisoners inside the jail learnt that special armed forces had been posted around the jail, perhaps as a precautionary measure against emergency. No sooner had the judgments been pronounced than the news of the death sentence on Bhagat Singh and others spread in the city like wild fire. Sec. 144 had atonce been proclaimed and without any notice or effort, a big meeting was held on Municipal grounds outside the city gate, speeches were delivered, criticising the *ex-parte* trial and the heavy sentences. Special editions of influencial newspapers had been published, in which photoes of all the prisoners in the Lahore Conspiracy Case were printed. The publication of these photoes was a bit startling both to the police and the jail authorities,

assembled near the Government College for picketing purposes.

In the evening a big procession was organised which frequently shouted "Long Live Bhagat Singh", "Long Live Sukhdeva", "Long Live Rajguru". At Bradlaugh Hall a huge meeting exclusively of students and youngmen took place, in which resolution congratulating Bhagat Singh and others for their brave sacrifice was passed. In the same evening and at the same time, another big meeting organised by the Congressmen took place at municipal grounds outside Morigate in which 12,000 people had collected, which was presided over by Shrimati Parbati Devi, daughter of late Lala Lajpat Rai.

Spontaneous *hartals* took place in many district towns of Punjab, and other big towns all over India. At Amritsar, the enthusiasm was as high as at

Lahore. A complete *hartal* was observed, and even tongas and other vehicles did not ply. Delhi, Bombay, Cawnpore, Allahabad, Benares, Calcutta and many other cities showed their respect to Sardar Bhagat Singh and others in publicly organised meetings.

Soon after the sentences were pronounced by the Special Tribunal, the Defence Committee set about to file an appeal in the Privy Council on the *ultra vires* point for the promulgation of the ordinance. A few words are necessary here about the Defence Committee.

As soon as it was discovered that the police wanted to launch a big conspiracy case at Lahore, many nationalist leaders, Hindu, Mohamedan and Sikh, began to show their interest in the case and their sympathy for the accused. Sometime in June 1929 a strong "Defence Committee" was formed at Lahore, which began to

collect money for defence purposes and to render help to the suffering families of the accused. It did not take much time to collect together a decent fund. It is significant that the fund was almost exclusively contributed by the poorer class. As the contribution in most cases was quite small, it is probable that some twenty to thirty thousand people must have contributed towards the fund.

The Defence Committee not only looked towards the legal defence, which was the smallest part of their duty as there was never any idea of putting up a legal defence, it also arranged to supply books to the undertrials who were voracious readers, to find lodging and boarding for the relatives who came to interview the prisoners from distant parts of the country, to supply the needs of the undertrials, and when possible, to

lender monetary help to the needy relatives of the accused

After the judgment was delivered, the Defence Committee began to plan for filing an appeal to the Privy Council This had been settled by Bhagat Singh and others from before As there may have been some misconceptions in the mind of some regarding this appeal in the Privy Council, it is necessary that Bhagat Singh's idea about it should be frankly stated

The foremost idea, ofcourse, was that it would serve the purpose of a propaganda in foreign countries The Viceroy, in a preamble to the ordinance, stated many facts concerning the conduct of the accused during the trial which necessitated the promulgation of the ordinance This provided an opportunity to controvert those facts Among the facts were the prolonged hunger strike to which the

accused resorted, and which prevented the continuation of the trial. By an appeal to the Privy Council Bhagat Singh wanted to show to the civilized world what inhumanities the political prisoners in India were subjected to, and also to hold before the world the selfless sacrifice of brave Jatindra Nath Das.

Another idea was to draw the attention of the enemies of England to the existence of a socialist revolutionary party in India. In his instructions to the counsel, Bhagat Singh emphasised that it should never be tried to show that they were no revolutionaries in India, nor should any attempt be made to take the help of British-made laws to get a reduction in the sentences.

The third idea was not less important than the first two, but from a political point of view, much more brilliant. It should be stated that in this idea Bhagat

Singh was greatly influenced by Bijoy Kumar Sinha who had a keen political sense. The idea was to postpone the hanging till that time when it should have maximum effect. At that time, *i.e.*, October, 1930, the whole country was greatly agitated over the numerous *lathi* charges, prosecutions and imprisonments all over the country. The hangings at that time would not have produced much impression in the country. Bhagat Singh and others had an apprehension that the Congress might come to a dishonourable settlement with the Government ; so he wished that the Government should hang him and his comrades at such a time when the hangings would strengthen the hands of the extremists and the younger party, and would reveal the weakness of the Congress.

The hangings on 23rd March, 1931 were so splendidly fitted with the inner-

most desires of Sardar Bhagat Singh that we can not but admire the stratagy by which he was able to score over the Government even in the matter of his death. The subsequent events also fully justified the keen political judgment of the young revolutionaries.

CHAPTER XIII

THE EXECUTIONS

From early in the morning on Tuesday, the 24th March, there was seen to be great commotion among the people in numerous towns all over the length and breadth of India. The news spread like wild fire that Sardar Bhagat Singh and his two comrades had been executed. All the morning newspapers came out with glaring headlines, some with black borders, annoucing the news to the people. It was found out that Sardar Bhagat Singh, Sj. Shivaram Rajguru and Sj. Sukhdeva were hanged to death in the Lahore Central Jail at 7-33 p. m., on Monday, the 23rd March. Loud shouts of "Long Live Revolution" were heard from

inside the jail fifteen minutes before and after the executions.

The manner of death was full of that bravery and tranquility which were Bhagat Singh's own since his childhood. While mounting the scaffold with his two comrades who were as unperturbed as Bhagat Singh himself, Sardarji addressed the European Deputy Commissioner who was present to witness the executions, and said with a smile on his face—"Well Mr. Magistrate, you are fortunate to be able to-day to see how Indian revolutionaries can embrace death with pleasure for the sake of their supreme ideal".

As soon as the Privy Council had failed, a powerful and well-organised movement was started to get the sentences commuted. Though the public may not be aware of it, Mahatma Gandhi made a sincere attempt to save them

from gallows. Youngmen and women took a leading part in organising demonstrations to impress upon the Government that the hangings would have very bad effect on the people of India. Never in the history of British India had there been such a widespread and genuine demand for the commutation of the sentences. Even in England the movement was gaining ground. It was stated that even the Viceroy had felt the influence of the public opinion in this matter. This was exactly as Bhagat Singh desired.

Then the truce, which was regarded by the young party as nothing but surrender, came in ; the Congress leaders suddenly suspended the mass-movement ; the Government heaved a sigh of relief, and then—calmly carried out the death sentences. Yes, this was exactly as Bhagat Singh desired. Was Providence also siding with Bhagat Singh in his efforts.

to score the last glorious point over his adversaries ?

As we have stated, the hangings and the subsequent events fully justified the expectations of Sardar Bhagat Singh and others. Sardar Bhagat Singh hanged has proved much more useful for the younger party than Bhagat Singh alive. As Pt. Jawahar Lal so beautifully expressed—" But there will also be pride in him who is no more. And when England speaks to us and talks of settlement, there will be the corpse of Bhagat Singh between us lest we forget, lest we forget !"

In a last letter to his younger brother Kultar Singh, whom he dearly loved, he wrote—" In the light of dawn, who can withstand destiny ? What harm even if the whole world stands against us ? ...Dear friends, the days of my life have come to an end. Like a flame of candle

in the morning, I disappear before the light of the dawn. Our faith and our ideas will stir the whole world like a spark of lightning. What harm, if this handful of dust is destroyed !"

CHAPTER XIV

REMINISCENCES AND REFLECTIONS

Sardar Bhagat Singh was a handsome young man, tall—5 ft. 10 inches, and well-built. He had a musical voice and could sing with emotion. One day, just after the sentences in the Assembly Bomb Case had been pronounced, his counsel, Mr. Asaf Ali with his wife, went to interview him. Bhagat Singh was locked up in a cell, and was in fetters. While they were approaching the cell, they heard a soft sweet voice singing in accompaniment of a twinkling metallic sound. Softly they approached, and lo ! They found Bhagat Singh the anarchist singing like a child

and ringing his fetters in tune with the song.

He had a heart, full of emotion and sympathy. Even in the characters of a fiction he used to take extra-ordinary interest, and used to suffer and enjoy with them. In the Special Magistrate's Court, he began to read aloud to us the beautiful novel, "Seven that were hanged" by Leonoid Andrieve. There is one character in it who shuddered at the idea of execution. He used to utter the words, "I shall not be hanged", and began to believe in it. When Sardar Bhagat Singh was reading out the last scene in the life of this weak condemned man, who was uttering the words, "I shall not be hanged" even while being led to the scaffold, he smiled and was full of tears. We listeners could not help being affected by the sympathetic tears of one, who had triumphed over the

idea of death, for one who was succumbing before it.

Bhagat Singh was an extremely well-read man and his special sphere of study was socialism. The batch of youngmen that figured in the Lahore Conspiracy Case was essentially an intellectual one. But even in this group Bhagat Singh predominated for his intellectual ascendancy. Though socialism was his special subject, he had deeply studied the history of the Russian revolutionary movement from its beginning in the early 19th century to the October Revolution of 1917. It is generally believed that very few in India could be compared to him in the knowledge of this special subject. The economic experiment in Russia under the Bolshevik regime also greatly interested him.

He read fiction also with interest. But his favourite works of fiction were of a

politico-economic nature. He had no interest in novels of high society life, or those merely confined to love or other human passions. In the jail he had begun to read the works of Charles Dickens which he liked very much. Some of his favourite works of fiction were: "Boston," "Jungle", "Oil", "Cry for Justice" (not fiction) by Upton Sinclair ; "Eternal City" by Hall Caine, of which many portions of the speeches by Romily he had by heart ; Reed's "Ten Day's that shook the world" ; Ropshin's "What never happened" ; "Mother" by Maxim Gorky ; "Career of a nihilist" by Stepniak whose "Birth of Russian Democracy" he regarded as the best of the early Russian revolutionary history ; Oscar Wilde's "Vera or the Nihilists", and so forth.

Ever since he began to read communistic literature, Bhagat Singh tried to

adapt his life to communistic principles. Kropotkin's "Memoirs" had great influence on him; but it was Michail Bakunin who really transformed his life. As all ideas of God are antagonistic to communistic principles, he tried to banish from his mind any belief in the existence of God. Outwardly he always declared himself to be an athiest. Whether he was really so from the bottom of his heart is a question that can not be definitely settled now. Perhaps he was successful in gaining victory over the idea of God. When he was arrested in connexion with the *Dussehra* Bomb Outrage in 1926, and was locked up day and night in a small cell, and subjected to all sorts of refined torture, his faith in athiesm was put to a severe test. Further studies for the next three years, only confirmed his ideas about the non-existence of God.

Except for a short period as a reaction against the executions in the Kakori Conspiracy Case, Bhagat Singh was never a terrorist. His whole faith consisted in mass-action, action for the masses and by the masses. He believed that the Congress, consisted as it was of land-lords, capitalists and rich lawyers, could never launch that action which would lead to complete economic freedom for the masses. "Gandhiji is a kind-hearted philanthropist," he used to say, "and it is not philanthropy that is needed, but a dynamic scientific social force." According to him what was needed most was a band of selfless youngmen who would organise and work for that social revolution.

He further believed that in order to initiate the youngmen in the gospel of this mission, an appeal would have force only when it was delivered from the plat-

form of the gallows, and he himself undertook to deliver that appeal. His statement in the Assembly Bomb Case was only that appeal, and it went straight to the hearts of thousands of youngmen, and women too.

While in the jail and in the condemned cell, Bhagat Singh passed his time in reading books and writing. He prepared a comprehensive almanac of those who had ended thier lives in the gallows, giving a short account of all the individuals, with suitable mottos for all. The mottos were written from memory, and show how well-read Bhagat Singh was; they also testify to his habit of committing to memory all noble and inspiring pieces of literature. He had by heart the whole of the first number of the first volume of his "Revolutionary" closely printed four full pages of matter, written, printed and published by the

Hindusthan Republican Association and distributed throughout India and Burma in February, 1925.

Another big and painstaking book that he commenced and finished in the jail was a detailed history of the revolutionary movement in India. It is marvellous how he procured contraband and rare literature even inside the jail. It was a big book, and if it is published, it will show how deeply studied he was in this sphere. For this purpose he had learnt Bengali and he utilised for his book the revolutionary literature in Bengali to the fullest extent.

Even from his condemned cell he was able to send out an important message to the Youth Leaguers in the Lahore Session in 1929. He was also able to send out drafts for some of the revolutionary pamphlets, notably, the "Philosophy of the Bomb." Only a short time

before his execution, he drafted and sent out a statement for "Young Political Workers," which may be regarded as his last will and testament to the nation.

As a socialist, Bhagat Singh had a true international outlook. That there was no tinge of provincialism in him is a fact that is common to all revolutionaries. But he had gone beyond that and left nationalism also behind in his stand as a man ; free from the shackles of Geography and language. For the Indian revolutionaries, the appeal of nationalism and patriotism have a supreme charm, and it was no small matter for Bhagat Singh to have come out of the confines of nationalism to take his stand as an internationalist.

From the moment of his arrest till the twi-light on the evening of 23rd March, when Bhagat Singh stepped out of his cell to commence his glorious and

final journey, there was not a moment in his life when any gloomy thought ever entered into his mind. When pressed by his relatives and even Government Officials to submit a petition for mercy, Bhagat Singh not only refused to do anything of the sort but in a dignified letter to the Local Government, maintained that he was a revolutionary soldier fighting for the emancipation of his country, "If the Government thought that a truce had been effected between itself and the people of India," he wrote—"then it is legitimate that the soldiers of freedom should be set free. But if it thought that the state of war continued, then they may easily kill us." His only request was that instead of being hanged, they might be shot dead by a squad of soldiers, as was only befitting soldiers of war.

As has been truly said in the "People" :—"Bhagat Singh is not only one more martyr, for thousands to-day he is The Martyr. And that tribute is deserved, too. But few can embrace martyrdom rejoicingly. Those who can keep their spirit at top-notch week after week, month after month for a protracted period of two years, with vicissitudes of all sorts, are rare even amongst martyrs. Mere youthful impulsiveness or enthusiasm, or a momentary idealistic conquest could not carry one through such an ordeal. Bhagat Singh remained as indifferent to legal appeals and to those for a reprieve as he remained to the trial itself. It needed a martyr's mettle with a good deal of a tough philosophy of life. Bhagat Singh had both of these in abundance.

"Nothing in recent memory so captured the popular imagination as did the

romance of Bhagat Singh. He has already become a legend and a short of legendary hero. Indian youth justly feels proud of him. His unique courage, his lofty idealism, his undaunted spirit would remain a light-house to guide many a straying soul.

"Bhagat Singh's fearlessness and sacrifice electrified the political atmosphere at a time lethargy had set in. The cry "Long Live Revolution" was popularised by him. He raised it in a British court of law, and the echoes are heard to-day every day in every Indian street. Though Bhagat Singh is dead, when people cry or hear 'Long Live Revolution,' the other cry, 'Long Live Bhagat Singh' is ever implied therein."

APPENDIX

Copy of the written statement filed by Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt in the Court of the Sessions Judge, Delhi, in the Assembly Bomb Case, on 8th June, 1931.

"We stand charged with serious offences and at this stage we explain our conduct.

The following questions arise.

(1) Were bombs thrown into the Chamber, if so, why ?

(2) Is the charge as framed by the lower court correct or otherwise ?.

"To the first half of the first question our reply is in the affirmative but some of the so-called eye-witnesses have perjured themselves and since we are not denying our liability to the extent and as

such as it is our statement about them be judged for what it is worth. By way of illustration, we may point out that the evidence of Sergeant Terry regarding the seizure of pistol from one of us is a deliberate falsehood, for neither of us had a pistol at the time we gave ourselves up.

"The other witnesses who depose to having seen bombs thrown by us, have not scrupled to tell lies, patent on the face of them. It has its own moral for those who aim at judicial purity and fairplay. At the same time we acknowledge the fairness of the Public Prosecutor and the judicial attitude of the court so far.

"In our reply to the next half of the first question, we are constrained to go into some details to offer full and frank explanations of our motive and circums-

tances leading upto what has now become a historic event. When we were told by some of the Police Officers who visited us in the jail that Lord Irwin in his address to the joint session of the two houses after the event in question, described it as an attack directed against no individual but against a constitution itself, we readily recognised that the true significance of the incident had been correctly appreciated.

"We are next to none in our love for humanity and so far from having any malice against any individual, we hold human life sacred beyond words ; we are neither perpetrator of dastardly outrages and therefore a disgrace to the country as the pseudo-socialist Diwan Chaman Lal is reported to have described us, nor are we lunatics as the 'Tribune' of Lahore and some others would have it believed."

Serious Students of History

"We humbly claim to be no more than serious students of history and conditions of our country, and human aspirations and we despise hypocrisy.

"Our parctical protest was against the institution which since its birth has eminently displayed not only its worthlessness, but its far-reaching power for mischief. The more we have pondered, the more deeply we have been convinced that it exists only to demonstrate to the world the Indian humiliation and helplessness and it symbolises the over-riding domination of an irresponsible and autocratic rule.

"Time and again the national demand has been pressed by the representatives of the people, only to find the waste paper basket as its final destination. Solemn resolutions passed by the house

have been contemptuously trampled under foot on the floor of the so-called Indian Parliament. Resolutions regarding the repeal of repressive and arbitrary measures have been treated with sublime contempt and Government measures and proposals, rejected as unacceptable by the elected members have been restored by a storke of the pen.

"In brief, in spite of earnest endeavour, we have utterly failed to find any's justification for the existence of an institution which despite all pomp and splendour organised with the hard earned money of the sweating millions of India is only a hollow show and a mischievous make-believe.

"And alike have we failed to comprehend the mentality of public leaders who help to squander public time and money on so manifestly a stage-managed exhibition of India's helpless subjection.

We have been ruminating upon all this, as also upon the wholesale arrests of the leaders of the Labour movement when the introduction of the Trade Disputes Bill brought us into the Assembly to watch its progress and the course of the debate only served to confirm our conviction that the labouring millions of India had nothing to expect from an institution that stood as a menacing monument to the strangling power of the exploiters and the serfdom of the helpless labourers.

"Finally an insult which we considered inhuman and barbarous, was hurled on the devoted heads of the representatives of the entire country and the starving and struggling millions were deprived of their primary rights and the sole means of their economic welfare.

"None who has felt like us for the dumb-driven drudges of labourers could

possibly witness this spectacle with equanimity, none whose heart bleeds for those who have given their life-blood in silence to the building up of the economic structure of the exploiters of whom the Government happen to be the biggest in the country, could repress the cry of the soul-agonising anguish which is so ruthlessly wrung out of our hearts. Consequently bearing in our minds the words of late Mr. S. R. Dass, once the Law Member of Governor General's Executive Council, which appeared in the famous letter he had addressed to his son to the effect that the bomb was necessary to awaken England from her dreams, we dropped bombs on the floor of the Assembly Chamber to register our protest on behalf of those who had no other means left, to give expression to their heart-rending agony. Our sole purpose was 'to make the deaf

hear' and to give the heedless timely warning.

"Others have as keenly felt as we have done and from under the seeming illness of the sea of the Indian humanity a veritable storm is about to break out. We have hoisted a 'danger signal' to warn those who are speeding along without heedings the grave dangers ahead. We have only marked the end of an era of Utopian non-violence of whose (June 8, 1929) futility the rising generation has been convinced beyond a shadow of doubt. Out of our sincerest good-will and love for humanity we have adopted this method of warning to prevent untold sufferings which we like millions of others clearly foresee.

Utopian Non-Violence

"We have used the expression 'Utopian non-violence' in the foregoing para which requires some explanation. Force

when aggressively applied is 'violence,' and is, therefore, morally unjustifiable. But when it is used in the furtherance of a legitimate cause it has its moral justification. Elimination of force at all costs is Utopian and the new movement which has arisen in the country and of which we have given a warning is inspired by the deeds which guided Guru Govind Singh and Shivaji, Kamal Pasha, and Riza Khan, Washington and Garibaldi, Lafa yette and Lenin. As both the alien Government and the Indian public leaders appeared to have shut their eyes and closed their ears against the existence and voice of this motive, we have felt it our duty to sound the warning where it could not go unheard."

Our intentions

"We have so far dealt with the motive behind the incident in question and

now we must define the extent of our intentions.

"It cannot be gainsaid that we bore no personal grudge or malice against any one of those who received slight injuries or against any other person in the Assembly. On the contrary we report that we hold human lives sacred beyond words and would sooner lay down our own lives in the service of humanity than injure any one else. Unlike mercenary soldiers of imperialist armies, who are disinclined to kill without *compunction*, we *respect*, and *in so* far as it lies in us, we attempt to save human life. And still we admit having deliberately thrown bombs into the Assembly Chamber. Facts, however, speak themselves and intention should be judged from the result of action without drawing upon hypothetical circumstances and presump-

tions. Despite the evidence of the Government expert, the bombs that were thrown in the Assembly Chamber resulted in slight damage to an empty bench and few slight abrasions in less than half a dozen cases. While the Government's scientist ascribed this result to a miracle we see nothing but precisely scientific process in it all. The first two bombs exploded in vacant spaces within the wooden barriers of desks and benches. Secondly even those who were within even two feet of the explosion for instance Mr. Rau, Mr. Sankar Rao and Sir George Schuster. were either not hurt or only slightly scratched. Loaded with an effective charge of Potassium Chlorate and sensitive Picrate the bombs would have smashed the barriers and laid many low within some yards of the explosion. Again had they been loaded with some other high explosive, with charge of des-

tructive pellets or darts, they would have sufficed to wipe out a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly. Still again we could have flung them into the official box chockfull with people of note And finally we could have embushed Sir John Simon, whose luckless Commission was hated by all reasonable people and who was sitting in the presidential gallery at the time. All this, however, was beyond our intenion and the bombs did not do more than what they were designed to do and the miracle consisted of no more than a deliberate aim which landed them in safe places.

We then deliberately offered ourselves to bear the penalty for what we had done and to let the imperialist exploiters know that by crushing individuals they cannot kill ideas. By crushing two insignificant units the nation cannot be crushed. We wanted to emphasise the

historical lesson that Letters de Catchet and Bastilles could not crush the revolutionary movement in France. Gallows and Siberian mines could not extinguish the Russian revolution. Can ordinances and safety bills snuff out the flames of freedom in India ? Conspiracy cases trumpeted up or discovered and incarceration of all youngmen who cherish the vision of the greater ideal cannot check the march of revolution. But timely warning if not unheeded, can help to prevent loss of life and general suffering. We took it upon ourselves to provide this warning and our duty is done.

What is Revolution ?

Bhagat Singh was asked in the lower court as to what he meant by revolution. In answer to that question, we would say that revolution does not necessarily involve sanguinary strifes

nor is there any place in it for individual vendetta. It is not the cult of the bomb and the pistol. By "Revolution" we mean that the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice must change. Producers or labourers inspite of being the most necessary element of society, are robbed by their exploiters of the fruits of their labour and deprived of their elementary right. On the one hand the peasants who grow corn for all starve with their families. The weaver who supplied the world markets with textile fabrics cannot find enough to cover his own and his childern's bodies. Masons smiths and carpenters, who rear magnificant palaces, live and perish in slums ; on the other hands capitalists, exploiters, parasites of society, squander millions on their whims. These terrible inequalities, and forced disparity of chances are heading towards chaos. This state of

affairs cannot last and it is obvious that the present order of society is merry-making on the brink of a volcano, and the innocent children of exploiters no less than millions of the exploited are walking on the edge of a dangerous precipice. The whole edifice of this civilisation, if not saved in time, shall crumble. Radical change, is therefore necessary and it is the duty of those who realise this to reorganise society on a socialistic basis. Unless this is done and the exploitation of man by man and of nation by nation which goes masquerading as imperialism, is brought to an end, the suffering and carnage with which humanity is threatened today cannot be prevented, and all talk of ending wars, and ushering in an era of universal peace is undisguised hypocrisy. By revolution, we mean the ultimate establishment of an order of society. Which may not be

threatened by such break down and in which the sovereignty of the proletariat should be recognised and as a result of which the world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and the misery and peril of wars.

Fair and Loud enough Warning

This is our ideal, with this ideology for our inspiration we have given a fair and loud enough warning. If however, it goes unheeded and the present system of Government continues to be an impediment in the way of the natural forces that are swelling up, a grim struggle must ensue involving the overthrow of all obstacles and the establishment of dictatorship of the proletariat to pave the way for the consummation of the ideal of revolution. Revolution is the inalienable right of mankind. Freedom is the imprescriptible birth-right of all. The labourer is the real sustainer of society

The sovereignty of the people is the ultimate destiny of the workers. For these ideals and for this faith we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned. To the altar of this revolution we have brought our youth as incense, for no sacrifice is too great for so magnificent a cause. We are content to await the advent of revolution, Long Live Revolution."